

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 H-03 SSO-00 CCO-00
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-----191850 114649 /41

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 791

AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS PANAMA 1233

MEXICO FOR PEZZULO AND THOMAS (CODEL SLACK)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OREP (CODEL SLACK)

SUBJEC: MEDIA REACTION TO CODEL SLACK PRESS CONFERENCE

1. RADIO, TELEVISION AND NEWSPAPER COMMENT ON CERTAIN
REMARKS IN CODEL SLACK PRESS CONFERENCE RANGED FROM SURPRISE
TO ANGER. COVERAGE IN THIS MORNING'S PRESS IS PROMINENT.
IT QUOTES EXTENSIVELY FROM THE PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT
AND INCLUDED THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF VIEWS WHICH THE
MEMBER EXPRESSED AT THE AIRPORT.

2. ONE RADIO STATION YESTERDAY URGED THE PANAMANIAN
GOVERNMENT TO PROTEST THE "FALSE ACCUSATIONS" OF THESE
TWO CONGRESSMEN (DORNAN AND SMITH) WHO ARE UNWORTHY OF
PANAMANIAN HOSPITALITY." IT CHARACTERIZED REPS. DORNAN,
SMITH AND STUMP AS "TROGLODYTES." TV
CHANNEL 2 QUOTED PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS AT LENGTH AND ENDED BY
SAYING "AS OUR NEWS DIRECTOR SAID THE OTHER DAY, THE U.S.
WILL TRY TO
CAST THE BLAME ON PANAMA SHOULD THE TREATY TALKS
FAIL TO PROGRESS. THE REMARKS OF SOME OF THESE CONGRESSMEN
SEEM TO BE THE BEGINNING OF THAT PROCESS". (THE ANNOUNCER
WAS REFERRING TO MARIO VELASQUEZ, NOT ONLY CHANNEL 2'S DIRECTOR
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BUT ALSO A CLOSE ADVISER OF TORRIJOS.)

3. PRO-GOVERNMENT TABLOID "CRITICA" HEADLINED "U.S. CONGRESSMEN
INTRANSIGENT". ITS EDITORIAL AND COLOMNIIST COMMENTARY ASKED
ANGRILY WHETHER PANAMA WAS UNREASONABLE TO HAVE WAITED 70 YEARS
FOR A MORE EQUITABLE TREATY. EDITORIAL CONTINUED BY SAYING
PANAMA PREFERS NEGOTIATIONS TO ARMED CONFRONTATION, BUT IF THE

FORMER WON'T WORK, THE LATTER IS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE. INSIDE COMMENTARY CALLED CONGRESSMEN'S REMARKS "ABSURD" AND "INGENOUS". PRO-GOP "MATUTINO" HEADLINES WERE Milder, CALLING CONGRESSIONAL DECLARATIONS SURPRISING. STORY ADDED THAT REMARKS OF SMITH, DORMAN AND STUMP LEFT PANAMANIAN JOURNALISTS "OPEN-MOUTHED". IT TOO ALLUDED TO MARIO VELASQUEZ'S THESIS THAT FAIR WORDS FROM WASHINGTON COULD BE A "SMOKE-SCREEN" FOR BLAMING PANAMA IF THE TREATY TALKS BREAK DOWN. SEMI-INDEPENDENT "STAR AND HERALD" AD "LA ESTRELLA" COVERED AT LENGTH BUT DID NOT COMMENT ON PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS.

4. COMMENT: THE PRESS GAVE SOME LUMPS TO THE CONGRESSMEN, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE EXCEPT FOR TWO UNRELATED EVENTS: FIRST, THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAD JUST DECIDED TO RETURN ITS TEAM TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, AND SECOND, CARNIVAL (MARDI GRAS) WEEKEND BEGAN THIS MORNING AND MOST PANAMA IS TAKING A VACATION FROM POLITICS. THESE STORIES TENDED TO SQUEEZE OUT ALL OTHERS.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 19-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PANAMA01233
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
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Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770060-0500
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770224/aaaaavlh.tel
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Litigation History:
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